

Bolz Conservatory Temporary Fee Proposal for Jan-June, 2022

Olbrich Botanical Gardens requests support from the Board of Parks Commissioners to continue the Bolz Conservatory temporary fees and operations (approved because of COVID-19 for Oct 12, 2020 through December 31, 2021) for January through June 1, 2022. By June 1, 2022, Olbrich staff will evaluate the fee and make recommendations for a long term fee structure. The temporary fee structure has operated as follows:

- \$6 admission for entry to Bolz Conservatory, temporarily increased from \$2, starting October 2020
- Free entry for youth 5 yrs and younger; free entry 10-12:00, Wednesdays and Saturdays for everyone; free passes offered everyday
- Admission to be collected by a paid OBS Conservatory Cashier
- OBS will pay the City 50% of the net revenue collected, except:
 - ✓ February 1-28, 17% of net revenue (Orchid Escape)
 - ✓ July 1-31, 17% of net revenue (Blooming Butterflies)
 - ✓ December 1-31, half net revenue plus \$5000 for Train Show guests
- OBS to collect admissions fee, report to City, and send a monthly check

This assumes:

- COVID pandemic is not yet contained; more emergence of variants which will affect operations, including likely cancellation of OBS fund-raising events such as Jan/Feb/March Cocktails in the Conservatory.
- Full crews of Olbrich Volunteers may not return to indoor volunteer jobs in 2022, so a paid Conservatory Cashier will be needed.
- The \$6 admission has not been a barrier for access to the conservatory; about 40% of visitors paid no admission Jan-Aug 2021.
 - ✓ There have been no complaints from visitors about the \$6 fee; online reviews of conservatory visits are unanimously positive (see comments on next page).
 - ✓ \$6 paid visitorship for June-Aug 2021 (12,419) was comparable to \$2 paid visitorship June-Aug 2019 (10,153); this does not include counts for 2019 Blooming Butterflies attendees.
 - ✓ Free entry available 10-12:00 Wednesdays and Saturdays; free passes available every day to ensure access to anyone who wants to experience the tropical garden.
 - ✓ Olbrich is a top tourist destination in Wisconsin; many paid admissions are from out of town guests who express gratitude that the outdoor gardens are free and willingness to pay the \$6 admission. This fee is comparable to neighboring conservatories:
 - Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory (Milwaukee), \$8
 - Greater Des Moines Botanical Center, \$10
 - Nicholas Park Conservatory (Rockford), \$7/\$9
- Revenue allocated to City of Madison will meet or exceed 2022 Parks budget revenue projections (\$80,000). Staff assume the 2022 admissions will be similar to 2021. See attached Jan-Dec, 2021 Conservatory Revenue.
- Revenue allocated to OBS will cover cashiering expenses and support. These resources will also be used by Olbrich's Community Engagement & Inclusion Working Group who has been working to reduce access barriers (2019-present) and will be proposing ways to make all community members feel like they belong and want to make Olbrich a regular destination.

Online comments from Trip Advisor, Google, and Yelp (June-July 2021):

“Friendly and helpful staff members made this beautiful experience the best! Beautiful plants inside and out – so much to see at your own pace. The paths in the greenhouse are easy to navigate and pretty accessible to everyone. This is a must see.” Talkie Toaster

*“Olbrich Botanical Gardens is a delight. The outdoor gardens are free to wander through. It is easy to spend an hour or more looking around. The indoor exhibit is amazing. One can walk through an array of plants including fruiting trees, orchids, ferns, too many to detail. **Free admission on Wednesday and Saturday before noon.** While the indoor garden feels wonderful in winter with its warm temps and high humidity, it can be a bit intense if you come in the heat of the summer. Overall. It’s a great place to look around. Lots of things for kids to see and the outside gardens has enough space so they can burn off energy. If you like unusual plants, you might just enjoy yourself.” Dean Siewart*

*“What a great public garden! **The indoor conservatory has a small admission fee.** The outdoor garden is free. You could spend quite a lot of time walking around. I really appreciate that nearly all the plants are labeled too.” Eric Brown*

*“One of the best Botanical Gardens I’ve visited. Especially liked the Conservatory which exhibited many Tropical plants I saw while living in Hawaii. The Thailand Sala was a real treat. The outside Gardens are free & **the Conservatory was only \$6 pp.** Donation boxes are placed thru the garden also to help with upkeep.” Al Robertson*

*“Best botanic venue summer or winter. Seeing it in all seasons has been fun. They have art installations you can walk throughout the gardens, and some special events. It’s great venue for weddings – having attended some I can say they make for some lovely photos. Winter indoor garden is pretty cool too – warms your body and soul during endless cold months. You can see blooming plants as well as some small birds and creatures. It’s one of the best community venues; **mostly free or fairly low cost fees.** Go, take family and friends and enjoy!” Barbara Gulten*

*“Beautiful grounds in any season and they are totally free. **Going to the indoor conservatory is a nominal charge but they have a lot of free opportunities.**” Nikki Medrano*

*“The gardens are beautifully grown with local prairie life. I love how the plants are controlled to grow naturally; really has a far inspired layer of depth to the design. The outdoor section is free for entry, but **the tropical atrium has a small charge –definitely worth it though!**” Jarrod L.*

“Actually fantastic. The gardens are super well-tended and the variety of plants is astonishing. Perfectly tranquil corner of the world worth the time it takes to explore. I highly recommend just getting lost in the outdoor paths without a map and exploring these amazing indoor/outdoor gardens.” Clark Hageman

THESE WERE THE ONLY COMMENTS THAT MENTIONED THE CONSERVATORY. THERE WERE NO NEGATIVE COMMENTS.

2021 Bolz Conservatory Admissions and Revenue for Jan-Dec 2021

Month	Total Revenue	Credit Card Exp	Wages & FICA	Paid to City	TOTAL Attendance	Paid Admission	Free Admission
Jan 2021	\$9,312	\$197	\$1,940	\$3,588	3161	1550	1611
Feb 2021	\$21,264	\$366	\$2,099	\$3,615*	7093	3536	3557
Mar 2021	\$14,808	\$310	\$1,420	\$6,539	4728	2453	2275
Apr 2021	\$18,264	\$376	\$2,071	\$7,908	5600	3061	2539
May 2021	\$24,930	\$476	\$2,309	\$11,072	7081	4183	2898
Jun 2021	\$21,048	\$389	\$2,830	\$8,914	6063	3516	2547
Jul 2021	\$29,136	\$490	\$3,549	\$12,549	8083	4860	3223
Aug 2021	\$24,234	\$435	\$2,571	\$10,614	6450	4043	2407
Jan-Aug 2021	\$162,996	\$3,038	\$18,790	\$64,799	48259	27202	21057
Estimates for:							
Sept 2021	\$15,000	\$310	\$2,700	\$5,930	4200	2500	1700
Oct 2021	\$15,000	\$310	\$2,700	\$5,930	4200	2500	1700
Nov 2021	\$15,000	\$310	\$2,700	\$5,930	4200	2500	1700
Dec 2021	\$6,000	\$150	\$2,700	\$6,575**	2700	1000	1700
Subtotal for Sept-Dec 2021 estimates	\$51,000	\$1,080	\$10,800	\$24,365	15300	8500	6800
Projected Totals for 2021	\$213,996	\$4,118	\$29,590	\$89,164	63559	35702	27857

*Adjusted to 17%

**Added \$5000 for Train Guests